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The Columbia Encyclopedia, Sixth Edition. 2001.

## tissue

in biology, aggregation of cells that are similar in form and function and the intercellular substances produced by them. The fundamental tissues in animals are epithelial, nerve, connective, and muscle tissue; blood and lymph are commonly classed separately as vascular tissue. In the higher plants, there are four main types of tissue: (1) meristematic tissue (apical meristem and cambium), composed of cells that grow, divide, and differentiate into all the other cell types; (2) protective tissue (epidermis and cork), composed of thick-walled cells that cover roots, stem, and leaves; (3) fundamental tissues, consisting of cells that make up the bulk of the plant body, including parenchyma (thin-walled cells used for food storage), collenchyma (moderately thick-walled cells used for strength), and sclerenchyma (heavily thick-walled cells used for support in stems and roots); and (4) vascular tissue (xylem and phloem), specialized cells used for conduction. Organs are usually composed of several tissues. In many diseases there are apparent changes in tissue (see [pathology](#)). [Histology](#) is the study of the structure of tissues.

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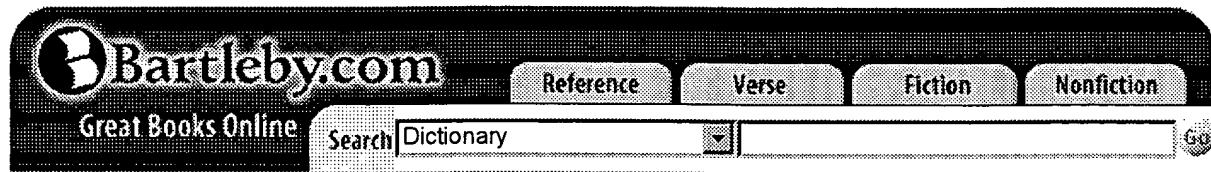
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The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language: Fourth Edition. 2000.

## tissue

SYLLABICATION: tis·sue

PRONUNCIATION:  tīsh'oo

NOUN: 1. A fine, very thin fabric, such as gauze. 2. Tissue paper. 3. A soft, absorbent piece of paper used as toilet paper, a handkerchief, or a towel. 4. An interwoven or interrelated number of things; a web; a network: "*The text is a tissue of mocking echoes*" (Richard M. Kain). 5. *Biology* An aggregation of morphologically similar cells and associated intercellular matter acting together to perform one or more specific functions in the body. There are four basic types of tissue: muscle, nerve, epidermal, and connective.

ETYMOLOGY: Middle English *tissu*, a rich kind of cloth, from Old French, from past participle of *tistre*, to weave, from Latin *texere*. See **teks-** in Appendix I.

OTHER FORMS: **tis'su·ey** —ADJECTIVE  
**tis'su·lar** —ADJECTIVE

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